

AO 91 (Rev. 11/11) Criminal Complaint

U.S. DISTRICT COURT - N.D. OF N.Y.

FILED

SEALED

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

SEP 14 2023 for the

Northern District of New York

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

v.

QUASHAWN PETTIFORD,

Defendant(s)

AT 0'CLOCK
John M. Domurad, Clerk - Syracuse

Case No. 5:23-mj-505 (TWD)

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief. On or about the date(s) of January 11, 2022 in the county of Onondaga in the Northern District of New York the defendant(s) violated:

Code Section

18 U.S.C. § 1951(a)

Offense Description

Interference with Interstate Commerce by Robbery

This criminal complaint is based on these facts:
See attached affidavit

☒ Continued on the attached sheet.

*Heather Weber**Complainant's signature*

Heather Weber, Special Agent, FBI

Printed name and title

Attested to by the affiant in accordance with Rule 4.1 of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure.

Date: Sept 14, 2023*Thérèse Wiley Dancks**Judge's signature*City and State: Syracuse, NY

Hon. Thérèse Wiley Dancks, U.S. Magistrate Judge

Printed name and title

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)	Criminal No.
)	
v.)	
)	
QUASHAWN PETTIFORD,)	
)	
Defendant.)	

AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, Heather Weber, being duly sworn, depose and say:

1. I am a Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and have been since September 2014.

2. I make this affidavit in support of a criminal complaint charging QUASHAWN PETTIFORD with interference with interstate commerce by robbery, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1951(a).

3. I have personally participated in the investigation of multiple armed robberies that occurred in the Syracuse, NY area between January 2, 2022, to January 11, 2022, which constitute violations of 18 U.S.C. § 1951 (Hobbs Act robbery). My knowledge of facts related to this investigation, including those set out below, is based on my personal participation in this investigation, my conversations with members of the New York State Police ("NYSP"), Dewitt Police Department, and the Syracuse Police Department ("SPD"), and my review of reports members of NYSP, SPD, and the Dewitt Police Department prepared, as well as statements and surveillance footage they obtained.

4. Because this affidavit is being submitted for the purpose of securing a criminal complaint, I have not included all facts known to me concerning this investigation. Instead, I have

set forth only the facts that I believe are necessary to establish probable cause for the requested complaint.

5. On January 11, 2022, at approximately 8:48pm, an armed robbery occurred at a Gulf gas station in Salina, New York ("Salina Station"). The store clerk told investigators that an African-American man entered the store with a gun in his right hand. The man was approximately 6'0" tall, dressed in black, and wearing a mask. The man pointed the gun at the clerk and told him to put his hands up and not move. Two more African-American males with masks then entered the store carrying handguns. The robbers took cash from the cash register and merchandise from behind the counter.

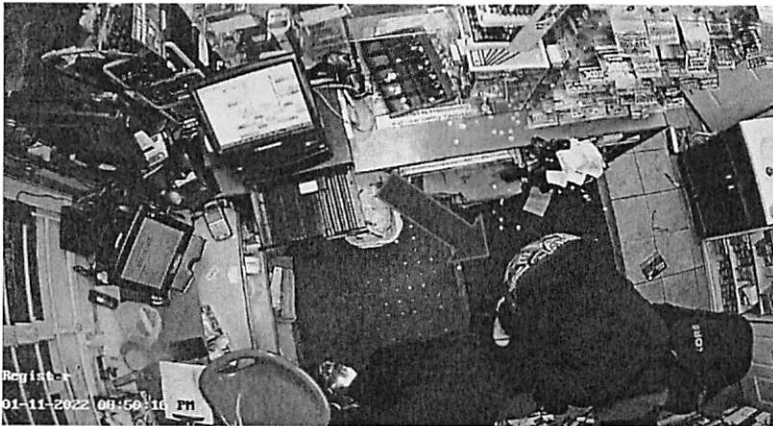
6. I have reviewed surveillance footage of the robbery, and it is generally consistent with the clerk's account of the robbery. In that footage, one of the robbers, who is believed to be PETTIFORD, is wearing a black sweatshirt with a blue hood, has a single white glove, and appears to be holding a handgun in his pocket. He is depicted below:



For purposes of comparison, below is a mugshot of PETTIFORD:



7. In the same footage, PETTIFORD at one point bends over and reveals part of his underwear. His underwear had a distinct pattern on it, as depicted below (arrow inserted).



8. After searching the scene, police discovered, among other things, what appeared to be a piece of a handgun grip lying on the floor behind the cash register. Based on the video, it appears to have fallen off the gun belonging to another robber.

9. The store owner estimated, based on his review of a report generated from the cash register, that about \$1,300 in cash was stolen. He also estimated that about \$1,200 in tobacco products were stolen. And he said the robbers took about \$500 from the clerk's pocket. He also confirmed that the Salina Station regularly purchases products from a Massachusetts-based distributor.

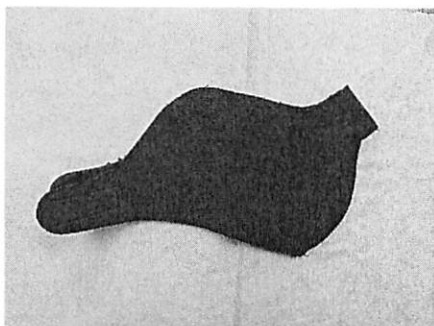
10. On January 13, 2022, investigators located on Boyden Avenue in Syracuse, NY a minivan matching the description of a van seen leaving another gas station robbery that occurred in Syracuse, NY approximately two hours after the robbery of the Salina Station. New York State Police Investigators surveilled the van and observed an African-American male exit a residence on Boyden Street in Syracuse, NY ("Boyden Residence") and enter the minivan. He then moved the minivan from the street and parked it in the driveway of the Boyden Residence. The male returned to the Boyden Residence before investigators could speak with him.

11. Investigators obtained a search warrant for the minivan issued by a state court judge. On January 14, 2022, they travelled to the Boyden Residence, where they gathered to prepare to execute the warrant. Officers noticed a female exit the Boyden Residence. Investigators approached the female and spoke with her.

12. The female consented to the search of the upstairs unit of the Boyden Residence. Investigators found in the residence prescription bottles in PETTIFORD's name. Investigators also found underwear matching the underwear observed in the surveillance video from the Salina Station robbery. A photograph of the underwear is provided below:



Investigators also found two black facemasks that appear consistent with the one worn by PETTIFORD in the footage from January 11, 2022. One of those masks is depicted in the photograph below:

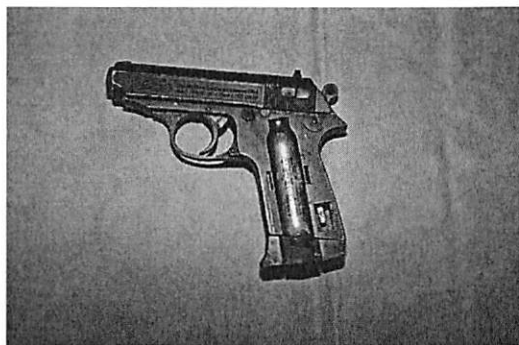


And investigators found a box of CO2 cartridges for a BB gun and a container of metal BBs.

13. Investigators searched an unlocked shed located on the property. In the shed, investigators found two shoe boxes containing approximately \$99.00 in small bills (in total), two BB guns, and what appears to be marijuana, cigarettes, and cigar wrappers. The cigar wrappers are the same brand as sold by the Salina Station.

14. Investigators executed the search warrant for the minivan found in the driveway of the Boyden Residence. In the van, they found a prescription pill bottle bearing Pettiford's name.

They found empty boxes of cigar wrappers that were the same brand as sold by the Salina Station. They also found a BB gun that appeared similar to one of the handguns observed in the footage of the Salina Station robbery. The BB gun was missing a piece of the casing that fit over the section where the air cartridge fit, as shown in the photograph below:



The firearm piece recovered from the Salina Station on January 11, 2020, fits over the cartridge near-perfectly.

15. In the van, investigators also found a white glove that matched the glove worn by PETTIFORD during the robbery, as demonstrated by the photo comparison provided below (white box and red circle added):

Surveillance Footage:



Photograph from Van



They also found a backpack that matched one seen in the January 11, 2022 surveillance footage, as shown below (white box and red circle added):

Surveillance Footage:



Photograph from Van:



16. PETTIFORD's fingerprints later were recovered from a bottle of orange juice inside the van.

17. Following the searches described above, investigators undertook a lengthy manhunt to attempt to locate PETTIFORD that involved personnel from numerous law enforcement agencies. On February 15, 2022, investigators located him near Wescott and Genesee St. in Syracuse, NY in part by using cellular location data obtained via a federal search warrant. Investigators arrested PETTIFORD and seized a cell phone they found on his person.

18. On the day of his arrest, I spoke with PETTIFORD and reviewed some of the contents of his phone with his consent. I later obtained a federal search warrant for PETTIFORD's phone. On the phone, there were two short videos that appear to have been taken inside of the van found on Boyden Street by someone sitting in the driver's seat. Multiple people can be seen holding large amounts of cash. In one of the videos, the person filming the video can be seen holding a revolver. Metadata extracted from the phone indicates that both videos were created at approximately 11:10pm on January 11, 2022.

19. On the phone, there also were several text messages that appear to relate to PETTIFORD hiding and law enforcement trying to locate him. For example, on January 13, 2022, a contact sent PETTIFORD a link to a Syracuse.com article that discussed the robbery of the Salina Station.

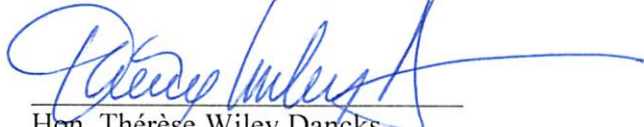
22. Based on the aforementioned information, I respectfully submit that there is probable cause to believe that QUASHAWN PETTIFORD violated 18 U.S.C. § 1951(a). I respectfully request that the Court authorize the filing of this complaint and issue an arrest warrant

so that PETTIFORD may be brought before the Court for further proceedings in accordance with law.

ATTESTED TO BY THE APPLICANT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF RULE 4.1 OF THE FEDERAL RULES OF CRIMINAL PROCEDURE.

Heather Weber _____
Heather Weber
Special Agent, FBI

I, the Honorable Thérèse Wiley Dancks, United States Magistrate Judge, hereby acknowledge that this affidavit was attested by the affiant by telephone on 9/14, 2023, in accordance with Rule 4.1 of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure.



Hon. Thérèse Wiley Dancks
U.S. Magistrate Judge